

# Appalachia Service Trip

## October 2018

### New Personal Takeaways from this Trip:

- **Gluten Free Diet** – I learned of the importance of being in tune with my body and that ultimately, I don't need any confirmation from other people to eat or act a certain way. I need to act and eat in the way that my body is calling me to and not compare myself to anybody else around me because we are all different
- **Athleticism is a Mindset** - I can still feel great, healthy, and maintain my confidence as an athlete even if I am not able to actually work out during a particular circumstance or time of my life. Athleticism is not a result of performing a certain task; it's a mindset and a lifestyle. I am AMAZING and a freaking BEAST whether I can work out or not. It's a gift and something I am not dependent on to still retain that confidence as an athlete
- **Keep God Constant** – When you are feeling satisfied and not going through a storm, it's incredibly easy to put off prayer and place your relationship with God to the side. God is constant, consistent, and always there for you. You need to show him the same continual presence and attention no matter the present circumstance
- **Simplicity** – It's incredibly fulfilling to live simply and remain humble by placing my self-worth in relationships rather than materials. I am determined to find a balance between living a comfortable and simple life in which I can still enjoy aspects of life that bring me joy, but go about doing so with incredible gratitude and humility
- **Health Innovation** – One of the largest challenges that exists for those that struggle financially is finding inexpensive healthy choices at restaurants or food at grocery stores. I would love to open a restaurant or grocery store that centers around marketing healthy but inexpensive food options for everyone. Another idea is creating a website that would provide recipes for healthy inexpensive meals that people could make.

### Things that were Emphasized on this trip:

- **Challenge Yourself** – When I am challenging myself to learn a new skill or actively practice a certain mindset, I feel as though I have a greater purpose in my life and am achieving something great. Always strive to add a new skill or mindset that can help you change the world and positively impact the other people around you.
- **Gratitude for Catholicism** – Attending the Baptist service opened my eyes to the stark religious differences in this country. I am so grateful for the Catholic emphasis on treating all human beings with love and dignity because this is a principle that universally can be applied in any situation and truly makes this world a better place.
- **Do the Best with what you have** – Life doesn't provide everyone the same opportunities to grow and thrive. However, gratitude for the opportunities and gifts that

we do have ultimately changes the world for the better. The world needs doctors, businessmen, lawyers, etc. Not everyone is called to live simply as a missionary. God calls us to use the gifts we've been given to be the best person we can be in a field or occupation that we can allow these gifts to shine. We aren't expected to do any more

- **You inspire others** - In loving yourself and not being afraid to be the person that God has called you to be, you will literally inspire other people to be their genuine selves. People love authenticity. When they see the freeness that comes with living without a fear of judgement, it intrinsically makes them more comfortable with how they want to act. I want to be the most un-doctor-like doctor this world has ever seen because as a result of me living as genuine as I truly can
- **Life is an attitude** – It doesn't matter whether someone is experiencing a storm or a mountain top, we all get to make the decision of how we want to view any situation. Even if a situation is completely awful, we can choose to look at it with a resilient and actively optimistic attitude rather than a self-pitying constant mindset of despair. It's not that we look at adversity with a passive optimism and not call the situation out for being incredibly difficult. However, after the initial emotions, we have this choice: how are we going to constructively deal with adversity.
- **I am called to Speak** – I have been blessed with the amazing gift of being able to connect and be vulnerable with any individual in this world. Sharing conversation and my personal experiences with others provides a fulfillment that nothing else does. Each one of us has a powerful voice that can be used to change this world for the better if used for the right reasons. Speaking sparks a passion and light in me that only comes from God.
- **Calling + Heart = Incredible Impact** – Committing to a life of simplicity and mission work is extremely admirable and does so much good for this world. However, the world needs doctors, engineers, teachers, etc. And not only that. The world needs doctors, engineers, and teachers who lead with their heart. Combining a calling with a heart of love leads to less societal injustice and greater impacts in the lives of those in need.
- **Staying Present is the Greatest Gift** – Remaining present to each situation is arguably the most impactful and influential act a human could ever give to another because of the depth that results. One of the greatest desires of all humans is to be known; focusing on quality rather than quantity fulfills this longing and provides the dignity that every person truly deserves.
- **Fear drives Societal Injustice** – A lack of understanding and fear leads to an incredible amount of prejudice and discrimination because of the fact that so many people fear the unknown and aspects of life that they don't completely understand. When someone fears something, they attempt to rationalize it and immediately slap a solution on it. We must become comfortable with not knowing all the answers about certain topics and situations as this uncomfortableness that we have ultimately leads to fear and then actions that develop this injustice.
- **Generosity Changes Lives** – By realizing that the money and material things that we own don't actually belong to us but instead belong to God, it allows us to see them as means of forming community and serving others rather than means of only serving our

own individual selves. By always having a “giving” attitude with what you have been blessed to presently have (even if it is not much), you are an example to others and inspire them to serve in that way as well

#### Concrete Ways I was Challenged:

- **Showers** – During the week, I didn’t shower once; it was difficult at first because I am used to showering twice a day, but I ended up getting used to it and realizing the gift of being able to stay clean. Showering before bed actually helps me cool off immensely and so I was definitely challenged to figure out a way to fall asleep without this benefit
- **Workouts** – Throughout the experience, there wasn’t any time for working out; this definitely intimidated me before the week occurred as I felt so reliant on “working out” as I felt like whether I worked out or not was something that defined me. I came to realize that I am an incredible athlete no matter if I can work out or not
- **Manual Labor** – During the week, we engaged in a lot of manual labor that I had never experienced before. We pulled up bushes, cleaned up debris, unloaded brush, pounded nails, and carried wood. It gave me a new perspective on these tasks and how physically demanding they truly are
- **Patience** – When serving at the nursing home, I found it very difficult to engage individuals in conversation because they either struggled to hear me or couldn’t process my words as well as they would have liked. I was forced to stay incredibly patient and have an open-mind as we attempted to communicate back and forth
- **Simple Meals** – In order to help us learn the benefits and challenges of living simply, we all cooked meals on a budget of \$3 a meal, a reality for many individuals in the Appalachia region. Even though the meals weren’t very large, this challenge made me truly appreciate the meals more and all the options I did have back at home
- **Healthy Diet** – A challenge for individuals struggling financially is to maintain a healthy diet as the cheapest food is usually the unhealthiest. Because we didn’t have many food options during the week, there were lots of opportunities to snack on the plentitude of junk food that was available at the house. However, I was proud of the way I chose not to eat any of it and maintain a healthy diet
- **Sleep** – During the week, I wasn’t able to get as much sleep as I normally do. Even though I was tired throughout the trip, I truly began to understand the bonus of getting a good night’s sleep rather than the need. Even though I do feel better with more sleep, I realized that I could still be a pretty great version of myself without my full energy. I learned to value doing my best with what I had rather than what I didn’t have

### Concrete Changes after the Trip:

- **Notifications** – Turn off some of the notifications on my phone
  - It was so refreshing during the week to not be on my phone and feel the constant need to scroll through all my notifications and feel constantly “in the loop” with sports and texts
- **Financial Generosity** - Put \$10 a month aside “on the front part of my wallet” which is the money I will spend to serve others
  - All the money and materials I am blessed with are not mine, they are Gods. I am called to share all that I own with other people
- **Evaluate Materials** – Look at all of the “things” and material goods you have at home and at ND and give away the things that you aren’t actually using
  - I have so much extra clothes, extra materials on my shelves, extra food in my dorm, and other materials that I am not using that so many others could have
- **Electricity** - Turn off all the lights when you leave a room and pull out appliances from the wall when you aren’t using them
  - Before the trip, I didn’t truly realize the energy cost of keeping lights on or leaving cords plugged into the wall. Every little bit makes a difference
- **Politics** - Devote a little less time to sports and more time to political situation
  - I am not very informed of the political situation in this country even though I have a platform and opportunity to make a change; I need to be informed